

## **Best Miscellaneous God/Goddess**

Zeus. Thor. Ra. No, this isn't the start of a bad cheer at a college football game. These are names of gods from Greek, Norse, and Egyptian mythology that command respect. If we think of gods as cliques (which certainly existed in mythology), these were gods that held prominent positions, were popular, and were powerful. However, while much of the attention in mythology across cultures is paid to a handful of gods with clearly defined roles, there were many characters who played important roles without a clear title and little notoriety. With these ideas in mind, Hermes, Hephaestus (both from Greek lore), and the Egyptian goddess Bast are mythological characters deserving of the award for best miscellaneous god or goddess.

There are a couple of reasons why Hermes deserves the nomination. First, he plays an important role as messenger of the the Greek gods, and as a result, is often called upon when there are conflicts between gods. For example, Zeus calls upon him to deliver his message to free Persephone from the underworld. He is also known to be one of the most helpful gods to humans. Among his key roles are protecting travelers, helping newly deceased souls successfully reach the underworld, and outwitting other gods for the benefit of humans. In addition, Hermes is also known to be a mediator in disputes between humans and other gods.

Hephaestus is another candidate worthy of this award. The Greek god of fire, volcanoes, and craftsmen (especially those who work with metal) is unique among the Olympians. As a baby he was thrown from Olympus for being ugly, and as a result, also became physically disfigured. Despite this roadblock, he accomplished much. Pretty much, if there was a weapon important to the gods, Hephaestus built it: Zeus' thunderbolt, Athena's shield, Eros' arrows. He is also credited for creating human women in Greek mythology, so when one thinks about it, humanity would not have survived without him.

The final candidate for this category is the Egyptian goddess Bast. Like Hermes, she often plays the role of protector to humans. Egyptians often turned to her in times of disaster. For example, she would send her cats into fires to put out the flames. She also seems to be one of the least underrated immortals in Egyptian culture. Apart from her duties as protectress, she held roles as a goddess of war, embalming, fertility, perfumes, and cats.

Hermes, Hephaestus, and Bast all have qualities that make them worthy of the award for best miscellaneous god/goddess. Their roles are all very different, and all three seem to have a role in directly helping mortal humans. While none of these candidates seems to fit into the popular group of gods or goddesses from their cultures, they are still remembered today.